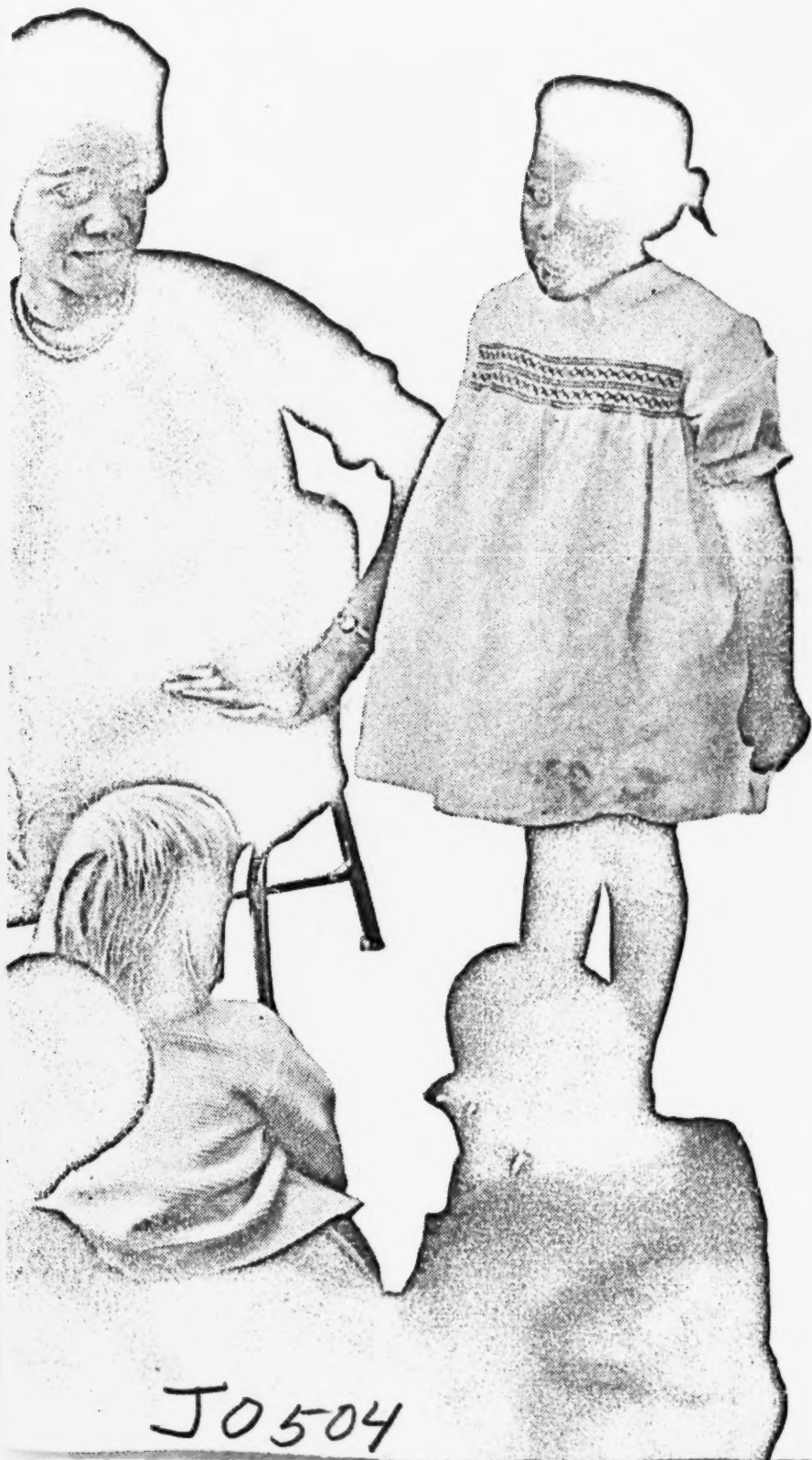


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Children from low-income families in substandard or overcrowded inner city dwellings in Baltimore were selected for an experimental preschool program because they typified the culturally disadvantaged youngsters who could be expected to suffer failure or frustration upon public school entry at the ages of five or six. Centers were opened in 1963. Development of a positive self-concept was one of the major goals of this early admission program. The limited experiences and vocabularies which youngsters brought to the centers reflected the paucity of parental contributions to early education. A sensory-rich environment was provided to arouse interest, to stimulate thinking, and to provoke questions. The teachers worked to strengthen the pupils' vocabulary and enunciation, their descriptive powers, their concepts of comparisons, their ability to count, their awareness of a wider word, and their capacity to distinguish. Posture, behavior, personal cleanliness, and sanitary living were stressed. To introduce orderliness into previously disorganized lives, a key training device was teaching youngsters to put things back into proper places. Materials and equipment were introduced gradually throughout the year so that youngsters with few possessions at home were not overwhelmed by and satiated with too much at one time. The snack and lunch periods were used to teach desirable eating habits and the benefits of balanced diets. A variety of foods were served and children were instructed on the use of eating utensils. The staff listed meals as a major concern because many of the children often refused anything new and preferred to subsist on sandwiches or milk. Parents were occasionally invited to join the children for lunch and observe the preparation and serving of the meal and good eating habits.							
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EARLY SCHOOL ADMISSION PROJECT

By EDGAR L. JONES



J0504

The children in Room 117 at Baltimore's Mount Royal Elementary School might seem to an observer to be unusually advantaged boys and girls. Cleanly dressed and well mannered, they have a large, attractive classroom filled with inviting paraphernalia: construction blocks, tricycles, aquarium, a record player with multiple sets of earphones, books, doll corner, art supplies, large canvas balls, a red wagon and other trappings of a topnotch nursery school. Instead of one harassed teacher, they have four adults in constant attendance: a senior teacher, an assistant teacher, a teacher-aide and a volunteer worker.

As the children discuss with the senior teacher, Miss Velma Branch, their trip to the zoo the previous Friday, they relate what they saw to a large classroom zoo picture with detachable figures. The extent of their vocabularies and their use of complete sentences is impressive for four-year-olds. "He's carrying food for the animals to eat," a small thing in a yellow dress says of one of the human figures. What kind of food? The children guess "steak," "roast beef" or, more conservatively, "hamburger."

The distinction between a "cage" and a "pen" is made readily by most of the eager circle at the teacher's feet. The pony in the picture is being walked because it needs "exercise." The man with the "needle" is the "zoo keeper doctor" (none knew the word veterinarian), and in his black bag he has "medicine" because the animal is sick.

What kind of an animal? One girl replied, "A boy animal," and the boy in the red jersey interjected, "I say he is a girl animal!" Several have remembered from the previous Friday that the animal in question is, more precisely, a buffalo.

The children in Room 117, though, are by no means advantaged boys and girls in the conventional sense. On the contrary, they are children from low-income families in substandard or overcrowded inner-city dwellings. They were selected for an experimental pre-school program because they typified the culturally disadvantaged youngsters who could be expected to

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suffer frustration and failure upon entering public schools for the first time at age five or six.

Their well-dressed appearances belie their home circumstances. As Miss Branch explains--during an interval when the children are out on the playground with the teacher aide and volunteer worker--the neat dresses and pressed trousers in some cases are the only good clothes the children have. On occasions the clothes are still damp from an overnight washing, or scorched from a hasty drying over a gas burner. In visits to the children's homes, teachers frequently find them in their underwear and barefoot, the good clothes having been put away for the next school day. Or the children are outside in clothing so ragged that they are not readily identifiable as the same Jimmies and Denises who appear at school in their Sunday best.

Their classroom conversations with a teacher, near the close of the experimental year, also belie their home backgrounds. No longer are they the children of the previous September who only nodded or mumbled a few indistinct words, who often lacked a sense of personal identification, who could do so little for themselves. The boy who had been on a bottle until a week before school opened, the girl who did not recognize her own name and ate entirely with her fingers, the bigger-than-average boy who had to be taught to stand up and urinate by himself, all have taken their places in a new classroom society. They say "excuse me" ever so politely when a careless foot causes a neighboring "ouch!" They happily put away materials and equipment, each thing in its proper place, at the teacher's bugle-call signal on the small electric organ.

The children obviously have responded well to the special attention given them, as most four-year-olds would to a pleasing mixture of art, music, games, stories, bus trips and playground activities. But have they learned enough to overcome some of the barriers to learning which environmental factors seem to impose on such children from the first grade onward? Do today's teachers have the right techniques to take children at a pre-school age and instill in them the initiative and competence which the home has not pro-

vided? Can their parents be made to understand the importance of schooling and be influenced to assume responsibility for their children's education?

These are some of the questions which the Early School Admissions Project, financed jointly by the Baltimore City Public Schools and the Ford Foundation, is intended to answer. Conceived in 1962 by Dr. George B. Brain, then superintendent of Baltimore schools, the three-year, \$330,000 program got under way in February, 1963. Centers for 30 children each were opened at the Mount Royal School, which serves a racially mixed, economically diversified midtown sector, and at the O'Donnell Heights Elementary School, which lies in a predominantly white, low-income section of heavily industrialized South Baltimore. Two other centers, also for 30 children each, were added in the 1963-64 school year, in schools serving low-income Negro populations.

Little doubt arises that the children in the experimental centers were in need of educational help. Baltimore school teachers again and again have encountered children of similar background in the early grades. The teachers have been baffled by their inability to get through to the children. Only now, with the concentrated individual attention and the home visits provided by the Early School Admissions Project, are there the beginnings of understanding of some of the troubles.

Many of the children entering the centers, for example, do not know or at least do not respond to their own names. They have heard themselves identified at home only as "boy," "little girl," "baby," "brother" or some nickname bearing no resemblance to their given name. Instead of being allowed to run wild, as is commonly considered to be the case with slum children, some of the four-year-olds have been babied to the extreme, stuck in a room all day to keep out of adults' way, and rarely allowed outside--for lack of clothing or fear for their safety.

The development of a positive self-concept is one of the major goals of the early-admissions program. Each child is greeted in the morning by his own name

and is addressed by that name whenever he is singled out for a question or comment. Terms such as "teacher," "that boy" or "that girl" are not accepted, as the children are made to understand that only when correct names are used can the meaning of remarks be conveyed. To develop a sense of personal identification, the children's names are woven into songs and games, printed on their creative efforts, read aloud, and posted at the individual places where their personal belongings are kept.

The development of a positive self-concept is one of the major goals.

Some of the children at the outset do not know how they look, because they never have seen themselves in a mirror or in a snapshot. Each center has mirrors so that children can become aware of their individual appearances. In extreme cases, initial use of a mirror leads to expressions of disbelief when a child is told the image is his own. A hesitant hand reaches out to test various parts of the image. In some instances a child is not convinced until he sees in the same mirror someone standing beside him whom he knows, and even then it may take several tests with a teacher, parent or classmate to clear away doubts. Viewing a picture of himself is more unusual yet, because in a picture one appears to be so small, but as other children identify the individual, his belief and pleasure grow.

The limited experiences and vocabularies which children bring to the centers are almost beyond belief, unless one has worked closely with them. Some of them, for instance, have never seen a dog or, if they have seen one, do not know what it is. Incredible as this may seem, especially to anyone familiar with the number of dogs at large in Baltimore slum alleys, it must be borne in mind that some children may spend practically all their pre-school years on the 11th or 12th floor of a high-rise public housing project, where dogs are not allowed. On a rare trip into the outside world—en route, perhaps, to a health clinic—a child may have seen a dog, but no adult has bothered to point it out and give it a name.

The paucity of parental contributions to early education is manifested in many ways. Aside from the children's unfamiliarity with the stories, nursery rhymes and songs which are common to a middle-

class toddler's culture, the early-admissions boys and girls had a seeming unfamiliarity with many aspects of their own environment, limited as that environment proved to be. In some instances it was because the children constantly had been told to stay in another room or to be quiet. Their childhood questions went unanswered, until gradually their curiosity was stifled. In other instances, parents use such vague, nondiscriminating language that children do not learn the names of common objects. Instead of telling a child, for example, to put a shoe under a chair, a mother says, "Put that thing under there," relying on hand motions to explain what she is talking about.

Miss Branch is not certain how many of her children at the outset did not know the names even of objects as commonplace as a table and chair. A few did not know, she feels sure, but as for the majority she only shrugs. "How can you tell," she asks, "what children know or don't know, when they do not respond?"

The co-ordinator for the entire early-admissions project, Mrs. Catherine Brunner, makes a similar point. "There is no test," she explains, "to determine cultural deprivation. A group situation is strange to most of these children; the teacher is strange, and the way the teacher talks is strange. We first have to establish a relationship with them before we can determine what they may or may not know."

The Columbia Mental Maturity Test was used as part of the process of selecting children for the program, but only to weed out cases of mental retardation (supported by neurological tests) so that the environmental factors in the children's backgrounds would more nearly stand alone. To determine cultural deprivation, the project staff sought out boys and girls (who must be four years old on or before Dec. 31 of the year in question to be eligible for September enrollment) whose family situations are permeated with multiple problems of the type believed to impede child development. Only those children were considered eligible who belong to families in which three or more of the following problems are persistent:

1. Limited family income.
2. Low-value and low-standard housing.
3. High density of population per dwelling.
4. Dependency of family on public services (welfare, health clinics, public housing, etc.).
5. Absence of a parent (death, divorce, separation or other reasons).
6. Changes in parents.
7. Chronic disease, physical or mental, in family.
8. Record of adult or juvenile delinquency in family (crime, nonsupport of dependents, etc.).
9. Limited educational background of parents.
10. Limited school achievement of older brothers or sisters.
11. Frequent changes of residence.

The list is not intended to set forth all the criteria for judging culturally disadvantaged children, nor are

the conditions enumerated in a presumed order of importance. After 453 children had been screened in 1963 for possible admission and the information in the project's Pupil Personal History Inventory had been summarized, Mrs. Brunner found that "a pattern seems to be emerging." She subsequently reported:

"Whenever two criteria—limited family income and limited educational background of parents—are identified, a multitude of other problems are usually inherent in the family situation. When these same two criteria are not identified, no other problems or less than three are usually defined.

"Limited educational background of parents and limited family income are significant factors in the life of a family. Certainly they suggest meager surroundings, material impoverishment and little hope for effecting a remedy for the situation. . . . Serious as material impoverishment may be, poverty coupled with low educational level seems to produce significant differences in perceiving and thinking which can create problems for children when they attempt to deal with learning tasks in the school environment."

The differences which Mrs. Brunner feels may be significant in terms of their effect on children are threefold. The first is a concern for the here and now, or philosophy of immediacy, which she finds evident not only in the approach to interpreting family situations and solving problems, but also frequently in speech patterns, with events of the past described in the present tense. She cites as examples of the philosophy in action: the tendency to buy one egg at a time, although the money for a dozen at a reduced unit cost is at hand; the practice of inviting friends in to consume all the contents of a Christmas basket in one day, when there would have been food enough to sustain the immediate family for several weeks; and the type of reaction a teacher encounters in getting a mother to help her child remember his home address. "Why should I go to all that trouble?" the mother will ask. "If I learn him, we'll move. He won't live there no more, and he'll be all mixed up." But is the mother actually going to move in the near future? "No, I'm not gonna move. But you don't never know."

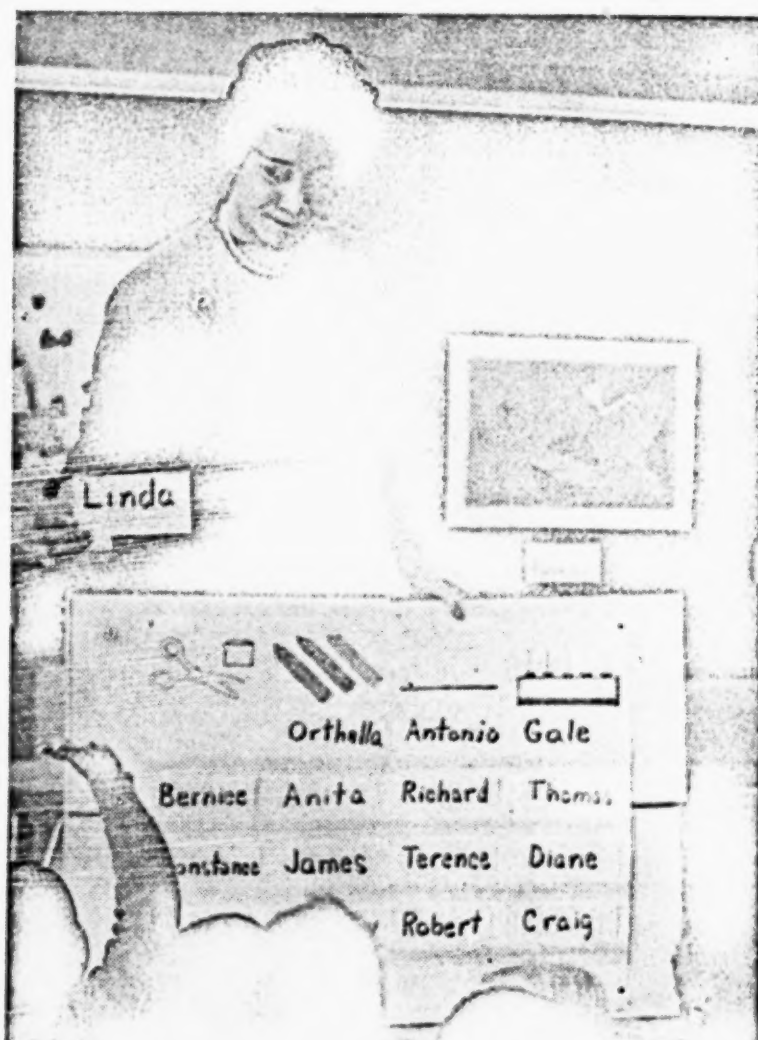
The second significant difference in low-income, limited-education families, Mrs. Brunner believes, is their concern for the concrete. "Things that can be touched, seen, tasted and smelled, and situations that can be experienced now, hold interest and evoke response," she says. "Little or no interest is evidenced in what might happen in the future or what is true about someone or something that does not exist in fact for the listener. Parent meetings, in order to be attended and hold the attention of participants, must be related to concerns the parents have expressed and must be 'concrete' in nature—demonstrations or work sessions involving objects, observations of children at work, or use of visual aids."

The third significant difference, according to Mrs. Brunner's observations, is what she terms the "lack of

differentiation in the environment." This covers factors previously mentioned as explanations of why some children approach school age without knowing their own names or the names of common objects (chair, dog, table) and are unaware of the physical characteristics which give them individuality. Inaccurate concepts, extremely limited vocabularies and the use of expressions intelligible only to the immediate neighborhood population make it difficult for the children, she says, "to understand what is heard, to relate ideas and words to the correct points of reference in the environment, and to express ideas and feelings comfortably and clearly."

Miss Branch, for her part, does not speak in terms of culturally disadvantaged or deprived, or of impoverishment in general terms. She speaks of children in need of help. One little girl, she points out, lives in an apartment furnished in French Provincial, yet, because she is an unwanted child frequently passed from relative to relative, is as handicapped in school as those from urine-saturated tenements.

Mrs. Brunner herself warns against generalizations. Some children of poor, uneducated parents may make good in school. Conversely, some children of well-to-do parents may have home situations that make them conspicuously ill-prepared to enter school. School experiences over the years have shown, however, that depressed areas of the city have a heavy concentration of children who fall behind from the first grade onward, and it is here that the experimental program is centered.



The "sensory-rich environment" *is to arouse interest, stimulate thinking* *and provoke questioning...*

Mrs. Brunner also emphasizes, partly in explanation of how well some of the Mount Royal experimental children seem to be doing, that they were selected at random, in conformity with the standards set for the research project, rather than on the basis of greatest need. That is, children were screened and eligibility lists of 80 to 100 children were compiled at each of the four centers. Thirty-two children were designated at each center as a random sample for early admission and another 32 were identified at random as the control group, whose achievement records in the first grade and thereafter would be compared with those of the children who began their schooling early.

For this reason, a child in the experimental program may meet at least three of the criteria set for eligibility (for instance: low income, absence of father and dependency on public services) and yet come from a relatively clean, well-organized household, compared, say, with the child next door. Under the plans to operate six additional centers in 1965-66 as part of Baltimore's anti-poverty program, Mrs. Brunner notes, children will be selected on the basis of greatest need rather than at random. The child from the dirty, disorganized household then will take precedence over the one who already is getting some training in orderly living at home.

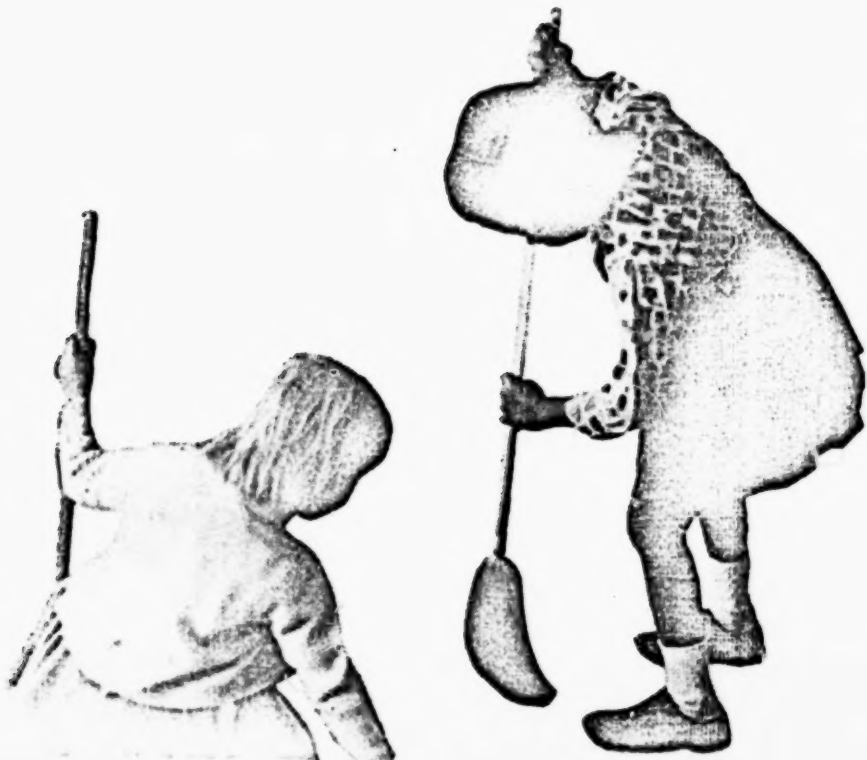
Another partial explanation of how well the Mount Royal experimental children appear to be doing is that nine of them in the 1964-65 group had been selected

from a public housing project, after extensive urban renewal clearance in the vicinity of the school had reduced the number of eligible children immediately at hand. Miss Branch says that she found the ones from the housing project to be better mannered at the outset and more responsive to adult discipline. She believes this is because the housing projects impose rules and regulations on their tenants, and the parents see to it that the children do not do anything to get them thrown out.

The process by which centers are established and children selected under the experimental program is somewhat involved. First, census tract data is studied to locate low-income, high-density areas in which there are public schools having both an alert, interested staff and available space. Then, the personnel of schools, health clinics and housing projects, along with ministers and other neighborhood representatives, are canvassed for names of potentially eligible children, and letters also are taken home from school by older children to explain the program and invite a show of parental interest.

After a list of potential eligible children is compiled, letters are sent to parents inviting them to a meeting at the designated school. If the parents come to the meeting and indicate an interest in having their children enrolled, arrangements are made for individual interviews and the testing of the children. The interviews with parents, which in part consist of a medical questionnaire conducted by a public health nurse, are designed to determine the kinds and numbers of problems persistent in a child's family. The children themselves are given a thorough physical examination and two types of tests. One is the Columbia Mental Maturity Test, previously mentioned, and the other is a "verbal maturity scale" which has been devised by the Educational Testing Services of Baltimore City Public Schools to provide a running check on the progress of the children during the program and thereafter.

The portions of the plan which call for parental initiative in responding to letters and coming to meetings have not proved altogether effective, Mrs. Brunner reports. Besides, she adds, "we are slightly suspicious of parents who come forward on their own to obtain educational opportunities for their children," because such parents display a concern which sets them apart from the type of parent and child that the program seeks to reach. (Mrs. Brunner is not, of course, against parental initiative and concern, except



when they may detract from the validity of an experiment.)

The most productive method of finding the children who meet the criteria, she says, is to have the senior teacher at a project center and the co-ordinator (herself) visit the homes of potentially eligible children. Some parents, she finds, either are unable to respond to written communications or experience difficulty in doing so. In any case the parents talk more freely in their home environment, and interview teams are able to observe firsthand the home conditions, including the presence or absence of books, writing materials, toys, television, radio, pets, play space and other indicators of the breadth of childhood experience. The home visits also provide an insight into the relationship between child and parent and between the child and any other children at home at the time.

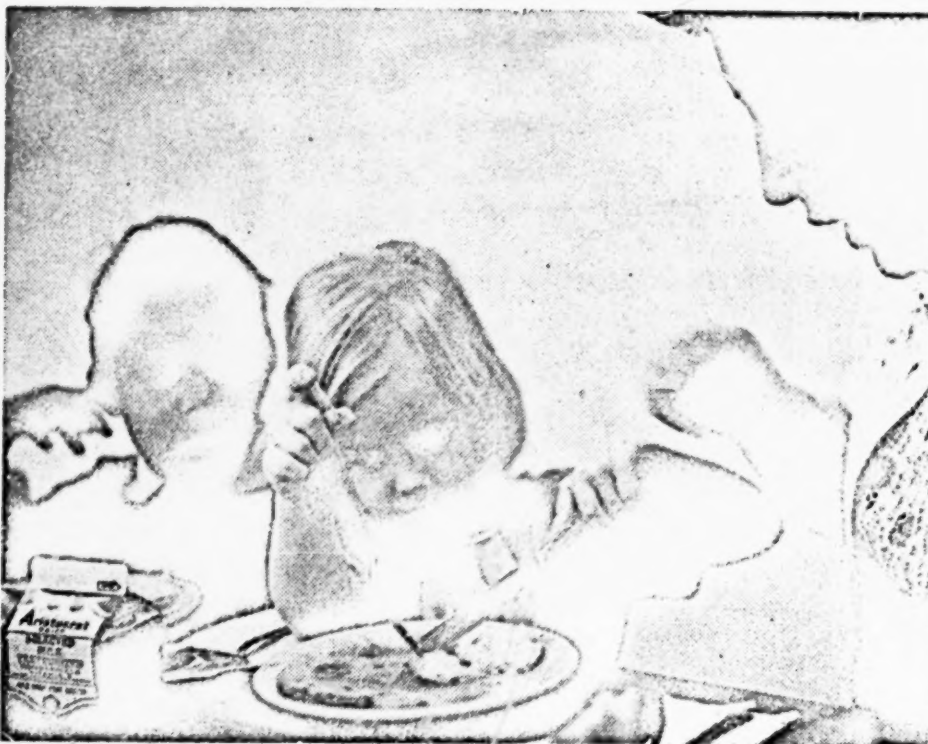
Once the children are selected, with at least two more than the project standard of 30 enrolled at the outset to allow for shrinkage, they are provided in the centers with "a warm, accepting classroom atmosphere" and "a sensory-rich learning environment." The emphasis on a friendly atmosphere is to dispel fear and to nurture feelings of self-confidence, adequacy, security and belonging to the group. The "sensory-rich environment" is to arouse interest, stimulate thinking and provoke questioning by having a variety of things to see, touch and hear, and occasionally to smell and taste as well, augmented by weekly visits to the public library and trips to pet stores, zoo and airport.

Details of the curriculum, ranging from art to zoology, take up some 40 pages in "An Early School Admissions Project Progress Report 1963-64," published by the Baltimore schools. It is sufficient to say here that both the curriculum and the teaching technique are exemplified by the way Miss Branch leads a class through a discussion of penguins, following a trip to the zoo. Holding a toy penguin in front of a class and moving it this way and that to keep attentions riveted, she asks for descriptions of the bird, its size, color, distinguishing features, number of eyes, number of toes, appearance of its feet, where it lives, how it walks with other penguins and what is unusual about it (a bird that does not fly).

Proceeding slowly and carefully, with frequent returns to words that initially were strange (such as the penguin's "vest"), Miss Branch works on the pupils' vocabulary and enunciation, their descriptive powers, their concept of comparisons (big-little, near-far), their ability to count, their awareness of a wider world ("Penguins live where it is very cold all of the time") and their capacity to distinguish between penguins' walking "behind" or "beside" one another as they form a "line" or "row." The discussion leads the children to learn a new song, "Peter Peter Penguin," adding music to the list of skills upon which the one lesson has touched. All the while, Miss Branch keeps an eye on posture ("Sit up straight and tall") and on

manners and behavior ("I can't hear Diana's answer unless Ricky faces the front and stops talking.")

Posture and behavior are steadily stressed, and so is personal cleanliness. Children at the experimental centers know where to find soap, towels, water, their own toothbrushes and tissues, and time is reserved for personal care. Because many of the children have limited acquaintance with sanitary living, including clean toilet practices, each item is introduced to the children early in the year through small group sessions, so that each child may understand what they are, how they will be used, where they will be kept, how they may be obtained and when they are to be put back in their proper places.



Putting things back in their proper places is considered a key training device to introduce orderliness in previously disorganized lives. Toward the end of a project year, when it takes no more than a signal from Miss Branch to touch off a swirl of selfish activity—putting away materials and equipment, sweeping up paper scraps, sponging off paint spots—it is difficult to believe that these are not model children from model homes, imbued with an unusual sense of personal responsibility. But methodical training has preceded the advent of happy, unquestioning routine.

Materials and equipment are introduced gradually through the school year, so that children with few possessions at home are not overwhelmed by and satiated with too much at one time. The introduction of something new frequently is made dramatic to arouse maximum interest. If this is the week, say, to begin using scissors, Miss Branch is likely to bring the supply of scissors in a gift-wrapped package as a class surprise. A full discussion of scissors then follows, with each child having a turn not only at cutting paper but at passing scissors in the correct way to another

child. As with all materials and equipment, a decision is reached as to the best place to keep the scissors. The agreed-upon section of a shelf or cupboard is marked by a picture of a pair of scissors for permanent identification. After a few days of practice, the children are expected to find the scissors by themselves and, more important, to return them to the right place at the conclusion of cutting and pasting.

Desirable eating habits and the benefits of balanced diets are the important educational aspects of the snack and lunch periods. The children are served a variety of foods, many of them strange to their way of living. They are instructed in the use of utensils. Miss Branch finds the meals a "major concern" of the staff, because so many of the children shy from anything new and prefer to subsist on sandwiches or, in extreme cases, solely on milk. Mrs. Brunner terms it important for parents to have opportunities occasionally to join the children for lunch and observe the way meals are prepared and served, the eating habits and the teaching procedures.

*"Personally I would like
more chance
to work with the parents."*

After working long and hard with the children, Miss Branch has a plaintive note in her voice as she remarks, "Personally I would like more chance to work with the parents." She finds them on the whole to be anxious to co-operate and to obtain help with their children. With barriers broken, they feel free to call on the teachers for advice and to visit the classes. At the monthly meetings of parents, the air is filled with questions as to how to get children to eat, to go to bed, to dress themselves and to get along with other children. But Miss Branch is somewhat appalled by the helplessness which many of the questions reveal and by the defeatism inherent in a mother's saying that she can't get her boy to bed and then adding, "I just don't know what to do with him." If they don't know how to cope with a child of four, Miss Branch asks rhetorically, "What are they going to do when he is 10?"

While involvement of the parents in program activities is a desired part of the Early School Admissions Project, Miss Branch acknowledges that taking parents

along on trips can create problems of its own. She refers to a trip to the Children's Zoo with picnic lunches, when the parents were so busy "socializing" that they did not pay attention to the class. On another trip, this one to the airport, the 15 parents who went along crowded to the front in their own excitement and made it extremely difficult for the boys and girls to see the incoming planes.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Brunner reports encouraging responses among parents, particularly during informal sessions, individual conferences and home visits. Some of the parents of 1963-64 project children helped to get mothers the following year to the examination places, and a few served as volunteers or substitute volunteers at the centers in 1964-65. As for the parents' appraisal of the entire program, they report that their children know more, take better care of things and put them away, help younger brothers and sisters to speak, sing, play games and tell stories, and are able to get to places in the neighborhood which previously they had not known existed.

More formal appraisals must await the completion of scientific studies now under way. The research design for evaluating the project has been developed by the Bureau of Research, Baltimore City Public Schools, under the direction of Dr. Orlando F. Furno, who is not expected to report until after the experimental period closes in June, 1966, and all the test data have been analyzed. Three separate studies also are in progress: an evaluation of the program's effect on the children's physical and emotional health by Drs. Oscar Stine and John Saratsiotis, Department of Maternal and Child Welfare, Johns Hopkins Hospital; the development of an "activity log form" by Dr. Richard N. Brandt, Institute of Child Study, University of Maryland; and a study of the effect of the project on "selected cognitive factors" by Drs. Brandt and David G. Kyle, also of the Institute for Child Study.

Opportunities for a variety of other studies are present. For example, the Mount Royal project center and one other are operated on a full school day, with the children napping on mats after lunch, before returning to class. The other two centers operate on a 9 a. m.-to-noon schedule, making it possible to test any difference in the development of those who had a full day of early training and those who had only a half day. Under the plans for six additional centers in 1965-66, an even finer distinction becomes possible, because under those plans 30 children will attend a center in the morning and another 30 in the afternoon.

Mrs. Brunner herself would like to follow the project children all through school, to see who becomes a dropout and who goes on to college. Already the results are promising, if not yet scientifically documented. Of the 60 children who entered the first two project centers in February, 1963, all who remained in the city entered kindergarten the following September. In Baltimore, kindergarten attendance is not compulsory, and many of the older brothers and sisters of the



project children had not been enrolled by parents until the first grade. None of the project children had problems of adjustment, such as crying and wanting their mothers, and their teachers estimated that two-thirds of the group were in the top half of their classes in achievement.

Forty of the original, or pilot, group remained in the city to enter first grades in the fall of 1964. Teachers reported that they had better scores on their reading-readiness tests than children from similar home environments. By late the next spring, all were reading, and had been reading for some time.

It was intended that the project children would be kept together in a kindergarten class by themselves, so that teachers would not be confronted with some children who had previous school training and some who had not. An exception was necessary in the case of the "pilot" children who attended the Mount Royal center during the February-June, 1963, period, because urban renewal clearance that summer cut their number in half. The 15 who remained in the neighborhood were placed in a kindergarten with a like number of middle-class children who attended private nursery schools the previous year. The teacher reported that they kept up with the others, and they all went together as a group into the first grade. There, the middle-class children spurred ahead at the outset of reading, but the project children maintained a steady level of interest which tended to balance the scales.

The approximately 120 children (64 per cent Negroes, 34 per cent whites, 1 per cent Asian) who were selected for the four centers operated in 1963-64 were the first group for which a "control" group also was selected for comparative purposes. Thus they will be the first to be the subject of extensive scientific study when both those who had and did not have the early training enter the first grade in September, 1965. All of the 1963-64 project children, except those whose families moved from the city, entered Baltimore kindergartens in the fall of 1964, and again there were no problems of adjustment. Teachers reported that they

had to spend less time on the introduction of materials and content, since the children previously had been over much the same ground. As a result, subjects could be explored in greater depth than is normal in these kindergartens. The kindergarten teachers also found the children more advanced than normal in language ability and group participation.

The guest book in Room 117 at the Mount Royal School is indicative of the widespread interest in the Early School Admissions Project as a careful study of what can be done to accelerate the achievement of children in depressed urban neighborhoods. Observers in the 1964-65 school year included an elementary school principal from Texas, an adjustment counselor from Canada, a Head Start director from Atlanta, an attendance supervisor from Mobile, a social science research analyst from the Bureau of Labor Standards in Washington, a pre-school director from Newark and a variety of others, along with observers from college campuses, magazines and television stations. The Mount Royal center not only is one of the first in operation and easy to reach but also is the one which has both white and Negro children. Miss Branch herself is a Negro, while the second teacher and the teacher-aide are white.

If the project demonstrates that intensive pre-school training can improve substantially the educational prospects of culturally disadvantaged children, the widespread application of the program would give rise to practical problems in Baltimore and presumably elsewhere. Even if such a program were confined entirely to depressed areas, through an equating of cultural deprivation with the disadvantages of poverty in general, there would be the problem of finding enough teachers as highly skilled as Miss Branch and as willing to spend as much time working with parents in conferences and home visits. There also would be problems, including financial ones, in providing a second qualified teacher and a knowledgeable teacher-aide for each class.

Beyond such problems lies the larger one of defining cultural disadvantages or cultural deprivation in terms that make the selection process acceptable to the majority of parents and taxpayers. As Mrs. Brunner points out, while there is a concentration in depressed areas of children whose home environment seems to impede learning, all neighborhoods are likely to have some children who for one reason or another are not getting the training and care at home that would help them to get along well in school. She anticipates that some day every school will have an early-admissions class. But if such a program is offered widely, many parents can be expected to want their children to have the advantage of pre-school training, regardless of home circumstances. The picking and choosing would then have to be in line with standards so clear-cut and demonstrably right that there would be no dispute over which children are entitled to an extra year of public schooling and which are not.